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TERRORISM: AN AN LINK IN LIBYA

How two former CIA agents, turned mercenar course in terrorism for Libyan strongman Muai Khadafy. With tons of arms and explosives, and cadre of other Americans like themselves, they scheme that some of the participants believed v a CIA-backed plot. Whoever the sponsors wer reveals a new breed of American soldiers of for their special skills to enemies of the United Stat

By Stephen Kurkjian
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As a Green Beret, he was accus-
tomed to clandestine assign-
ments in exotic places. But this
was different.

Before, whether in Southeast Asia or the Dominican Republic, he'd al-
ways known that he was working for
the United States. But now he was in
Libya, an avowed enemy of the United
States, working for its terrorist-prone
military.

He had been in Tripoli less than a
week when he was first taken to see
the base of operations for the group he
had joined. With another American at
the wheel, they drove about twenty
miles south of their luxury, seaside hot-
el until the sandy stretches of North
African desert gave way to a lush or-
ange grove. The car stopped at the end
of the grove in front of the palace of
Mohammed Idirss El Senussi, the for-
mer king of Libya, who had been
ousted in 1969 in a bloodless coup
mounted by Muammar Khadafy, the
Libyan leader.

Behind a set of locked doors in the
basement of the servants' quarters was
located, in effect, a small American
munitions factory, stocked with explo-
sives shipped from the United States.
There a group of Americans was busy
camouflaging small bombs as lamps,
candles, briefcases, and ashtrays.

The Green Beret, who less than
ten days earlier had been ~~going~~
through routine army drills at Fort
Bragg, North Carolina, was now part
of an ongoing operation which, from
1976 through at least 1979, is alleged
to have provided terrorist training and
explosives for the Libyan government.

At its simplest, this story tells how
a growing band of mercenaries, many
of them Americans, are selling their
daring and special knowledge to the
highest bidder — in this instance, the
forces of international terrorism. But
some of the Americans involved in the
Libyan project — including the Green
Beret who was given a leave of absence
by his superiors to take part in the op-
eration — are convinced that the US
government knew full well what they
were doing, and may have let the pro-
ject continue longer than it should
have, in hopes of infiltrating the inter-
national terrorist movement. Muam-
mar Khadafy, after all, has openly fi-
nanced such groups as the Palestine
Liberation Organization, Italy's Red
Brigades, the Irish Republican Army,
the Japanese Red Army, German's
Baader-Meinhoff gang, and others.

There is little doubt, though, that
this project was a scheme hatched by
two former Central Intelligence Agen-
cy (CIA) employees, Edwin P. Wilson
and Francis E. Terpil, who used their
expertise to design a program that
supplied explosives and people to train
terrorists in Libya.

first Americans recruited for the Lib-
yan affair informed the CIA of the op-
eration in September 1976, the agency
notified the FBI. Yet the operation
continued at least until late December
1979, according to a federal investiga-
tors' report, more than three years
after the FBI investigation was begun.

Up to that point, officials now al-
lege that the following had taken
place:

- More than twenty Americans, including five former CIA employees, a Green Beret on leave, five ex-Green Berets, five former army explosives experts, and two civilian naval engineers were flown to Libya to perform a wide variety of support activities for Khadafy's military.

- Some of the Americans were put to work camouflaging terrorist bombs while others trained Libyan commandos in everything from bomb detonation to parachute jumping.

- Millions of dollars worth of military hardware, including twenty-five thousand pounds of explosives and a ground-to-air Redeye missile, were contracted for shipping to Libya without the required approval of the US